

of Bali (Korn 1936), in which a community is chosen for study not so much on the basis of its representativeness in a statistical sense, but rather because it is held to show prototypical forms and patterns in a relatively uncomplicated, direct, and undistorted fashion. Highly traditionalized communities which have been relatively isolated from acculturative contacts are considered to have changed more slowly than other communities and so are favored as providing pictures of underlying social structures which are clouded over by adventitious elements in the more dynamic communities. This approach has tended to lose favor as it has become apparent that it is based on a dubious theory of social change and that the traditionalism of isolated communities is as often interpretable as an adaptation to peculiar environmental circumstances as it is a persistence of earlier and more fundamental patterns.

<sup>13</sup> There is a handful of the so-called *Bali Aga* ("original Balinese") villages whose organization differs markedly from those of the overwhelming majority, having age groups, a gerontocratic political structure, communal land tenure, etc. Though the significance of these villages from an ethnohistorical point of view is an interesting problem, their position within Balinese society generally is marginal in the extreme. For descriptions of such villages, see Bukian (1936), Korn (1933), and Bateson and Mead (1942).

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Peace and Progress in New Guinea<sup>1</sup>

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ADMINISTRATIVELY the Dutch designate a large sector of the Vogelkopt in western New Guinea as the Ajamaroe District. The same term is applied to the inhabitants of the area, though they are divided into many fairly small groups by linguistic differences and have no common name for themselves. Very little is known about any of them except those whom the government has induced to take up part-time residence in about 50 hamlets clustered about a chain of shallow, muddy lakes in the mid-interior. The administrative center for the district is located near the western end of the lakes. Its personnel are few, not more than a half dozen at the most. Their communication and supply line to the outside is by amphibious plane, which is scheduled to make weekly appearances. The only other contact is by foot over a trail to the south coast, a devious route over rough terrain.

In this district, as in other parts of the interior, the Dutch government has moved very slowly in extending its authority over the natives, mostly because of a lack of manpower and resources. In Ajamaroe, regular patrols enforcing some semblance of justice do not get much beyond a day's march from the lakes. Even this control is recent and in many respects is superficial. It aims at keeping peace and at introducing the rudiments of health and education, but is quite permissive with respect to most native customs and tentative in its advocacy of change.

The area was first penetrated by a small contingent of the Dutch Army in 1935. One of its objectives was to suppress the petty but incessant warfare that made life and property insecure and kept the Ajamaroe in constant turmoil. Their ideal man was belligerent and vengeful, and those with outstanding records as killers were their head men or chiefs. They were called in Malay *kapala parang*—literally "head knives." They were products of a mass anxiety characterized by suspicion, vindictiveness, deceit, and avarice. According to Ajamaroe belief, no death was natural unless it came at the end of a long life, and perhaps not then. Furthermore, every unnatural death demanded revenge, though a life could be paid for if the murder was such by inference or through negligence. Payment was possible, for example, to atone for the death of guests. A host was always under suspicion if his visitors fell ill, and he had to pay their relatives if they died. On the same theory a man paid for the death of his wife if she died on his clan land, and her relatives paid for his death if he died on theirs. Suicides by married women were fairly common—consciously directed acts of aggression, for they called for a payment by the husband, who was assumed to be the cause.

All of this meant that unless a man could buy his way out of an accusation

he was marked for death, and so had one of two courses open to him. Either he killed again and again in self-defense or in retaliation, and so began a career leading to the status of a kapala parang, or he placed himself under the protection and command of such a person. Ambition, envy, and vanity also played their parts in aggravating aggression and in the building of a reputation based on its undisciplined exercise.

Kapala parang were important not only because of their reputation as killers. They were also rich men. They did not have to be physically formidable at all if they had the wealth to buy men who were. In their capacity as rich men they were known as *bobots*—"possessors of many things"—and they gained and maintained their influence through the servile obedience of men and their wives who were indebted to them for past favors or hoped to benefit from their future patronage. Their wealth consisted of food, but also of trade goods that trickled into the area from the coast. An indispensable asset was a stock of cloths, known as *kain timor*, which were traded into the area from Ceram or Timor.

These cloths were of many kinds and sizes, their respective values known only to Ajamaroe connoisseurs, but there were two main categories pertinent to this account. In one were the ancient and sacred pieces transmitted from a man to his heirs, usually his sons. They were identified with the ancestral spirits of the family and were conceived to have supernatural power. They were kept away from the direct light of day, wrapped in moldy parcels the opening of which was an awesome ritual that gave health and success to their guardians. Their protective power, through associations with the dead, safeguarded the spiritual well-being of family and clan. In the other category were the many varieties of secular cloths that were kept in constant movement, passing from hand to hand out of family and clan lines. These goods were essential to the functioning of the Ajamaroe social system, for they were required as bride price, were the only acceptable payment for a life, and were the foundation for a system of property exchanges between parents-in-law and brothers-in-law.

The transactions involving the relatives of a woman and her husband were complicated, and their details need not be described. Their outstanding feature was that they kept a husband heavily obligated to his wife's relatives. In addition to paying for his bride, he had to transfer more goods to them when she became pregnant, when she bore a child, when she died, and when their children were initiated into a secret society or into adult status. An even more burdensome obligation resulted from exercise of the wife's relatives' privilege of making loans to the husband's relatives, loans which had to be repaid on call and with an increment. In order to meet these demands the husband loaned what he received to others, expecting them to return more than they received. As the result of an emphasis on keeping the *kain timor* in constant circulation, everybody, including the rich, lived mostly on credit.

Bobots financed the marriages of those who lacked the means and thus set in motion a series of property exchanges between the two parties to the marriage contract that continued for life. Consequently, unless a dependent person

could work his way to solvency—which was not likely—he remained forever in bondage to his benefactor, who simply acted in his place, assuming his debts and accepting what was due him. When a young man without means or parental backing wished to get married, he approached one of these financiers—normally one with an already existing exchange relationship with the agent of the bride-to-be—and obligated himself for service in partial compensation for the payment of his bride price. The preferential marriage partner here was a classificatory mother's brother's daughter, but the choice of a particular woman was most often dictated by economic considerations; that is, by the advantages accruing from the balance of obligations and counter-obligations investing the backers of a marriageable pair. There was a great deal of bickering and bargaining for position in the marital negotiations, and the principals had little to say about the outcome.

A groom in service did manual labor for his benefactor, clearing and fencing his fields, building his houses, and carrying his goods. He also supplied him with food and acted as servant, errand boy, and henchman. In return for this active loyalty, his benefactor took full responsibility for his actions under an employer liability concept known as *isti*. In accordance with this custom a kapala parang might demand anything of his dependent, including murder or theft, if he was prepared to meet the consequences by force or by financial restitution.

Kapala parang also trafficked in hostages and slaves. They kidnapped the children of delinquent debtors and either kept them until they were redeemed or traded them to other bobots for *kain timor*. Sometimes the victims were held as reserve capital to be used to pay an obligation when not enough *kain timor* were available. As long as they remained in captive status they were treated virtually as slaves, working for their masters and receiving little personal attention. Many passed from one owner to another until they fell into the hands of coastal traders.

The second objective of the 1935 military mission was to induce the Ajamaroe to congregate in villages. They lived in clan groups but were not clustered in one place, the individual households of a patrilineal descent group being scattered over the land it collectively claimed. Dwellings were erected in or adjacent to family gardens on the theory that they had to be protected from pigs and thieves by watchful care as well as strong magic. The houses were flimsy constructions of poles and bark, raised from 2 to 20 feet off the ground. Some were built on thin stilts, others on high stumps or wedged into the crotches of living trees. None were built to last for long because a new residence had to be established every two or three years when new fields were cleared. For ceremonies, such as initiations into tribal life, special houses or complexes of buildings were raised. In some instances, as for the death ritual, the buildings were occupied for as long as a year. Gardens were planted in their vicinity, and many people assembled for an extended series of sacred and secular events. Not even these constructions were designed for permanent or repeated use, however. They were destroyed or abandoned at the termination of

the ceremony for which they had been built. Thus there were no population concentrations other than those arising from the requirements of terrain and soil and from the huddling of dependents around the farmsites of their patrons and masters.

In their initial attempts to break this system of warrior capitalism, the Dutch resorted to cajolery and bribery. They offered beads, metal ornaments, knives, axes, fish hooks, and other European goods to the kapala parang as an inducement to declare a general amnesty and draw their people together in villages where they could be educated and given medical care. These inducements were met with suspicion and aloofness. They were not enough to establish permanent settlements. The hamlets that they created were little more than transient abodes, like the old ceremonial houses. But with repeated efforts and a strategic display of force, the authorities were able to break the power of the warriors in the lake area. At present every effort is made to ferret out breaches of the peace, and no reported crime goes unpunished.

The peace was secured; but imperceptibly something almost as disturbing to the government developed. This was an intensification and proliferation of bobotism. Not only did the kapala parang become more powerful in laying aside their knives; new bobots emerged in the vacuum of creeping pacifism. Then, robbed of their natural right to murder and mayhem, they turned their attention to the rapacious pursuit of kain timor with all its possibilities for gain and aggression. More men had more time to become involved in complicated financial deals that left no one solvent and made everyone a high-pressure bill collector. The multiplication of petty capitalists was made possible not only because they no longer had to be gunmen; they did not have to pay for protection, and the obligation of isti no longer held. Furthermore, their field of operations was greatly expanded because former enemies could be drawn into the game of financing the careers of dependents who no longer lived with them but were just as effectively tied to them and their ambitions.

In short, warfare was replaced by the manipulation of people through the control of essential goods; and by 1954 everyone was so entangled and pressured by debtors that the police and other officials spent much of their time settling disputes, punishing assaulters, and investigating suicides resulting from quarrels about kain timor. The price of a bride went up, along with everything else. The marriage rate went down, and the marriage age went up. Few people got married before they were twenty-five. Domestic quarrels intensified. Odd marriages, some incestuous by clan rules, were negotiated to suit the convenience of financial backers.

Repeatedly the District Officer inveighed against the nuisance and tried to get the people to turn their attention to economic production, to more food and cash crops, to health standards, and to education. Finally, one day in March of 1954 at an open meeting called to investigate a row over kain timor debts, he lost his patience and exclaimed, "Why don't you get rid of these useless things!" He expected no answer, but he got one immediately. A man in the group—a bobot—apparently sensing that the moment had arrived, spoke up and said, "All right, we will." There was no opposition. On the contrary, the crowd mur-

mured its approval. It was a spontaneous and popular decision triggered by the District Officer's outburst. Realizing that he might have evoked expression of a widespread sentiment he paid visits to other hamlets, related what had happened at the first, and made a plea for the general abandonment of kain timor. The suggestion was so well received that he called a meeting of all the important men in the area, along with the Indonesian schoolteachers and pastors and a priest. Because it was crucial to everything else, his specific question was: What is to be done about the marriage payment? The first person to speak was the richest and most powerful man in the district, who argued for the abolition of kain timor. The District Officer suggested that cotton yardage and guilders in limited amounts be substituted. There was no dissent and everyone agreed to have all kain timor out of circulation in six months.

In August the District Officer made another patrol of the area to settle on a means of disposing of the troublesome cloths. At the first hamlet he suggested that the secular pieces be burned or deposited with him and that the sacred ones be registered with him and returned to their owners. Someone shouted that those in the first category should be burned, and then and there they were thrown on a bonfire. Word of this action spread rapidly, and when the officer arrived at the next hamlet a fire was already going and people began to throw their cloths on it as he approached. They were in a jubilant mood and suggested that they plant a tree on the spot to commemorate the event. With varying degrees of enthusiasm and spontaneity other communities elected either to destroy their treasures or to relinquish them to government officials.

The consequences of the sudden decision to renounce the traffic in kain timor were no less surprising than the decision itself. They began to develop immediately and were so apparent that even the Ajamaroe remarked about them. First, hamlets increased in size; people began to leave their gardens and to take up residence near the schoolhouses that the government had built. Second, more children came to school, the increase in the number of girls being especially marked. Third, the number of marriages increased, their age level dropped, and more children were born or were on the way. Fourth, there was a stir of excitement about economic development. Men began to talk about their need for money and trade goods, and finally the whole district committed itself to the building of a road to the coast. This was to serve not only as a communication link to the newly enchanting world outside but as the foundation for an import-export business, the Ajamaroe contribution to which was as yet unspecified. Native spokesmen began to ask officials when the jeeps and trucks were to arrive, as if a bargain had been made and they expected the government to fulfill its promise.

In trying to find an explanation for this combination of events, the District Officer suggested that the rejection of kain timor was crucial to the acceptance of the other things that he and other officials had been advocating in the name of improvement or progress. Whatever the explanation, he was disturbed, for the government was not prepared for the revolution, which raised almost as many problems as it solved.

Structurally, the impact of peace and progress on Ajamaroe society was

extensive. Bobots ceased to exist, and with them all the attendant bonds and groupings of relatives and nonrelatives that their operations created, physically and psychologically. Men and women began to live and work together for whatever purposes and for whatever individuals their personal interests dictated. Residence patterns changed with the movement from farm to hamlet. A new marriage market, the school, took the place of the dance houses annually constructed for the purpose of bringing young men and women together for premarital dalliance. Leadership qualifications changed without a change in top personnel, for the revolution came from above. New forms of wealth loomed as a basic requirement for chieftainship; but collaboration with the government became a recommendation for its formal acceptance. The number of headmen dropped sharply and a marked tendency toward individualism emerged.

There was another effect that did not come to the attention of the authorities until late 1955. This was the abandonment of the rituals associated with the sacred kain timor. Traditionally, when a death occurred the corpse was exposed on a scaffold near a forest border where it remained until its fleshy parts decomposed and the skull and thigh bones could be recovered and distributed to the heirs of the deceased. In the meantime, buildings were constructed nearby to house near relatives of the deceased and to provide a dance pavilion and ceremonial quarters for the many people who assembled from time to time for pleasure and business. This was an auspicious occasion for renewing contacts with powerful ancestors through the medium of the sacred cloths, thereby ensuring long life and prosperity. In addition, the mundane festivities provided a vehicle for commerce involving the secular cloths, for this was the occasion, the last in a man's life, when an effort was made to balance his account. His heirs promised to satisfy as many of his creditors as possible, and thus spent much of the time trying to force payments due him.

The intimate connection between the sacred and the profane had unhappy consequences following the abolition of kain timor payments, for the Ajamaroe inferred that the government was opposed to their death rites. Obediently they abandoned them along with their associated activities. The dead were buried; their bones remained interred and their spirits neglected. In consequence, misery and misfortune increased; crops withered, sickness spread, pigs laid waste to fields. The conviction that these afflictions were on the increase was fortified by the traditional belief that compounded adversities were a manifestation of spirit displeasure with the failure of a family to meet its financial obligations. In order to gain relief it was necessary to enact the death ritual just as if a member of the family had died and, as a part of it, to satisfy the claims of as many creditors as possible. With this recourse denied them, the Ajamaroe were caught in a spiral of doubt and fear.

In addition to exhibiting the intermeshing effects of cultural integration in action, this impasse exemplifies a common consequence of an undetected blockage or interference in the channels of communication between a people and the authorities upon whom their welfare depends, even when the inten-

tions of such authorities are above reproach (Barnett 1956:158-170; 175-180). The Ajamaroe had not been told to abandon their death rites; but, confused by conflicting advice from their own leaders, they concluded that they should. Fearful of invoking official wrath, they concealed and thus compounded their anxieties. Knowing nothing of their disquiet, the authorities took no steps to alleviate it until mediation of a third party made it possible to bring the people's complaints into the open.

Men in high places often have less to lose in renouncing the supports for their position than appears on the surface (Barnett 1953:389-400). So it was with the leader of this revolution. In explanation of his advocacy of the new order, he says that he has become a Christian and as such he sympathizes with the poor people who were in perpetual bondage under the old system. When pressed further, he confides that he was unhappy even before his conversion, the reason being that there was too much quarreling and killing. Coming from a bobot of considerable distinction, this admission is likely to strike an outsider as hypocritical until he discovers that in this instance the aversion to homicide has an acutely personal reference. Back of it lies a murderous sequence of events that have not yet run their full course according to Ajamaroe logic. Their beginning is uncertain, but they came to a climax just prior to World War II when this man instigated the slaying of five others, two of them bobots. He took this action in his capacity as a kapala parang in revenge for the deaths of two of his brothers. In retaliation, the kinsmen of two of his victims killed his father. He issued orders for their execution and at the same time prepared to defend himself and his supporters from attacks by the clansmen of the other three.

At this point the feuding was interrupted by the Japanese invasion of the area and detention of its key figure, along with other headmen, in a concentration camp. It was apparently during this period of enforced restraint that he found wisdom and perhaps personal advantage in supporting and being supported by a powerful foreign authority. In any event, with the return of the Dutch he abandoned his plans for revenge and cooperated with the police in their efforts to suppress violence. Whether or not it was inspired by fear for his life, this decision entailed no loss of influence or prestige. He now bears the title of Radja, an honor that the Dutch bestow on influential headmen in this region who support the objectives of the administration. His more recent decision in the interests of both peace and progress has not only consolidated his position with the authorities but has made him a popular leader.

## NOTE

<sup>1</sup> This paper was read at the meeting of the Southwestern Anthropological Society and Wenner-Gren Conference, held at the University of California, Los Angeles, in April, 1959.

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